

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~computer-implemented method for provisioning databases for users on a network, the method comprising the steps of:~~
a first party managing one or more database systems;
receiving from a plurality of second parties, information for subscribing to database services supported by the one or more database systems managed by the first party, wherein the database services include services for storing and managing data provided by the second parties; and
wherein the information is gathered during ~~a registration processes~~ during which said second parties identify database resources, provided by the first party in support of said database services, for which the second parties are willing to pay;
providing, to database applications ~~owned and controlled by the second parties,~~ access to the database services to which the second parties are subscribed;
wherein the database applications, ~~owned and controlled by the second parties,~~ interact with the one or more database systems managed by the first party by sending, to the one or more database systems, database commands that conform to ~~the a~~ database language supported by the one or more database systems;
~~whereby the second parties use the database applications under their ownership and control, while the database applications send the database commands to the database systems managed by the first party, thereby obviating the need for the second parties to manage the database systems used by their database applications;~~
wherein execution of the database commands allows the second parties to manipulate data objects stored within at least one of the one or more database systems;
delivering to one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the second party to subscribe to said database services provided by said first party; ~~and~~

- ~~delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to access a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed;~~
wherein the steps of receiving, providing, and delivering are performed by one or more computing devices.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:
at least one of said second parties is an application service provider that provides application services to a plurality of third parties over ~~said a~~ network; and
the step of providing access to the database services includes providing database services to an application used by said application service provider to provide said application services to said third parties.
 3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
receiving over ~~said a~~ network a request to perform a database management operation from a user associated with a particular second party of said plurality of second parties; and
responding to said request by performing said database management operation on one or more databases controlled by said first party without human intervention by said first party.
 4. (cancelled)
 5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing access ~~over a network~~ includes providing access over a public network of computer networks.
 6. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein the step of performing the database management operation involves allocating a different amount of resources to said particular second party than is currently allocated for said particular second party.
 7. – 9. (cancelled)
 10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the first party also provides database application services over ~~said~~a network; and the method further comprises the step of delivering over the network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to access a database application service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over ~~the~~a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to specify or indicate changes to at least one of profile information, payment information, and the selection of services to which said one of said second parties is subscribed.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over ~~the~~a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to supply content for a subscribed database.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over ~~the~~a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to develop a new database application.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over ~~the~~a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to integrate an external service.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering over ~~the~~a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that present a status of a user subscribed resource selected from database resources managed by said first party.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- delivering over ~~the~~ a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that present the user with a user-selectable representation of a web site building wizard for building a Web page with a database component associated with an interface to a database; receiving user input indicating the web site building wizard; and executing said web site building wizard, including presenting a series of screens to the user to prompt user input for building the Web page.
17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of the first party updating the one or more database systems by receiving from a community server over ~~the~~ a network an update to the one or more database systems, wherein the community server provides the update to a plurality of service providers over said network.
18. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of the first party sending to a community server a status of a user subscribed resource, wherein the user subscribed resource is maintained by said first party.
19. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure a database device used to provide said database services as one of a dedicated device and a plurality of virtual devices.
20. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure at least one of a dedicated device and a virtual device of a plurality of virtual devices as one of a staging device available only to a database service developer for developing database services, and a production device for making database services available to a user who is not the database service developer.
21. (original) The method of claim 20, further comprising presenting a user interface for transferring an application from a staging device to a production device.
22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:

- the step of delivering to one of said second parties ~~over the network~~ one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the party to subscribe to said database services is performed as part of a registration process; the interfaces include controls for receiving a user input value for a maximum amount of subscribed resources; and
- the method further includes the step of presenting an alert if an amount of subscribed resources consumed by said party exceeds a threshold percentage of the maximum amount of subscribed resources.
23. (Canceled)
24. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the maximum amount of subscribed resources includes a maximum amount of at least one of
- an amount of storage space,
 - a number of users connected to a platform in a period of time,
 - an amount of processor time used in a period of time, and
 - a number of transactions completed in a period of time.
25. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
- presenting to the user a set of selectable sources of content;
 - receiving user input indicating a selected source; and
 - launching a source update process to connect to the selected source and update a database with information received from the selected sources.
26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein
- the user input indicating a selected source also indicates a schedule for updating from the selected source; and
 - the source update process connects to the selected source according to the schedule for updating from the selected source.
27. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

- in response to user input that specifies that data should be loaded into a subscribed database, determining whether the subscribed database currently exists for said one of said second parties; and
creating the subscribed database if the subscribed database does not currently exist for said one of said second parties.
28. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
presenting representations of selectable application development kits;
receiving user input indicating a selected development kit from the user; and
launching a staging process including
configuring consumable database resources on a staging database device, wherein a staging database device can be accessed by the user for developing the new database application and cannot be accessed by users associated with other parties of said plurality of second parties,
receiving development input from the user; and
building a new application on the staging database device based on the selected development kit and the development input.
29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, the step of developing the new database application further comprising the steps of
after receiving user input indicating a selected development kit, determining whether a client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded to a computer of the user over ~~the~~ a wide area network; and
if it is determined the client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded, downloading the client process to the computer of the user over the wide area network before the step of building the new application.
30. (original) The method of claim 28, the step of developing a new database application further comprising the steps of:
receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use;
and
in response to receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use, launching a production transfer process including sending a

request to the first party to transfer the new application to a production device on which the new application may be accessed by users who did not develop the new application.

31. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising integrating the external service, wherein the step of integrating comprises the steps of:

- presenting a representation of a selectable external service;
- receiving user input indicating a selected external service; and
- launching an integration process to provide the external service to the user.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the selectable external service includes at least one of a payment service, a mobile Internet portal, an enterprise resource planning application, and a customer relationship management application.

33. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the first party performing at least one of the steps of:

- setting up database parameters;
- reporting database usage;
- backing up the database;
- upgrading the database;
- controlling database versions;
- implementing database security; and
- implementing data security within the database.

34. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- if a costing database does not already exist, then
 - automatically creating the costing database of database resource usage by user, and
 - initiating a costing model with price per unit of consumable resource per service;
 - inserting data into the costing database based on actual use of database resources by the user;
- executing the costing model to compute a cost-per-user based on the data in the costing database and the price per unit of consumable resource per service; and
- billing the user for the cost computed by the costing model.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the costing model supports:
fixed price per unit of usage;
variable price per unit usage as a function of usage;
flat price up to a maximum value of usage;
different prices for different users;
different prices for different services; and
different prices for increments of usage above a maximum subscribed usage.
36. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~One or more computer-readable storage ~~medium~~media storing instructions ~~for provisioning databases for users on a network, the instructions comprising instructions for performing the steps of~~which, when executed by one or more processors, cause:
a first party managing one or more database systems;
receiving from a plurality of second parties, information for subscribing to database services supported by the one or more database systems managed by the first party, wherein the database services include services for storing and managing data provided by the second parties; and
wherein the information is gathered during ~~a registration processes~~ during which said second parties identify database resources, provided by the first party in support of said database services, for which the second parties are willing to pay;
providing, to database applications ~~owned and controlled by the second parties,~~ access to the database services to which the second parties are subscribed;
wherein the database applications, ~~owned and controlled by the second parties,~~ interact with the one or more database systems managed by the first party by sending, to the one or more database systems, database commands that conform to ~~the a~~ database language supported by the one or more database systems;
~~whereby the second parties use the database applications under their ownership and control, while the database applications send the database commands to the database systems managed by the first party, thereby obviating the need for the second parties to manage the database systems used by their database applications;~~
wherein execution of the database commands allows the second parties to manipulate data objects stored within at least one of the one or more database systems;

delivering to one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the second party to subscribe to said database services provided by said first party; ~~and~~
~~delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to access a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed;~~

37. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36 wherein:

at least one of said second parties is an application service provider that provides application services to a plurality of third parties over ~~said a~~ network; and the step of providing access to the database services includes providing database services to an application used by said application service provider to provide said application services to said third parties.

38. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36 further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

receiving over ~~said a~~ network a request to perform a database management operation from a user associated with a particular second party of said plurality of second parties; and
responding to said request by performing said database management operation on one or more databases controlled by said first party without human intervention by said first party.

39. (cancelled)

40. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36 wherein the step of providing access ~~over a network~~ includes providing access over a public network of computer networks.

41. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 38 wherein the step of performing the database management

operation involves allocating a different amount of resources to said particular second party than is currently allocated for said particular second party.

42.–44. (cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, wherein:

the first party also provides database application services over ~~said a~~ network; and
the computer-readable medium further comprises instructions for performing the step of
delivering over the network, to a user associated with one of said second parties,
one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the
user to access a database application service to which said one of said second
parties has subscribed.

46. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of
delivering over ~~the a~~ network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more
messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to specify or indicate
changes to at least one of profile information, payment information, and the selection of services
to which said one of said second parties is subscribed.

47. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of
delivering over ~~the a~~ network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more
messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to supply content for a
subscribed database.

48. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of
delivering over ~~the a~~ network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more
messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to develop a new database
application.

49. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over ~~the~~ a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to integrate an external service.

50. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of delivering over ~~the~~ a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that present a status of a user subscribed resource selected from database resources managed by said first party.

51. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
delivering over ~~the~~ a network, to a user associated with one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that present the user with a user-selectable representation of a web site building wizard for building a Web page with a database component associated with an interface to a database; receiving user input indicating the web site building wizard; and executing said web site building wizard, including presenting a series of screens to the user to prompt user input for building the Web page.

52. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of the first party updating the one or more database systems by receiving from a community server over ~~the~~ a network an update to the one or more database systems, wherein the community server provides the update to a plurality of service providers over said network.

53. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the step of the first party sending to a community server a status of a user subscribed resource, wherein the user subscribed resource is maintained by said first party.

54. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure a database device used to provide said database services as one of a dedicated device and a plurality of virtual devices.

55. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for presenting to a user associated with said first party a user interface to allow said first party to configure at least one of a dedicated device and a virtual device of a plurality of virtual devices as one of a staging device available only to a database service developer for developing database services, and a production device for making database services available to a user who is not the database service developer.

56. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 55, further comprising instructions for presenting a user interface for transferring an application from a staging device to a production device.

57. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36 wherein:

the step of delivering to one of said second parties ~~over the network~~ one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the party to subscribe to said database services is performed as part of a registration process; the interfaces include controls for receiving a user input value for a maximum amount of subscribed resources; and the computer-readable medium further includes instructions for the step of presenting an alert if an amount of subscribed resources consumed by said party exceeds a threshold percentage of the maximum amount of subscribed resources.

58. (Canceled)

59. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 57, wherein the maximum amount of subscribed resources includes a maximum amount of at least one of

- an amount of storage space,
- a number of users connected to a platform in a period of time,
- an amount of processor time used in a period of time, and
- a number of transactions completed in a period of time.

60. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 47, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
presenting to the user a set of selectable sources of content;
receiving user input indicating a selected source; and
launching a source update process to connect to the selected source and update a database with information received from the selected sources.

61. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 60, wherein
the user input indicating a selected source also indicates a schedule for updating from the selected source; and
the source update process connects to the selected source according to the schedule for updating from the selected source.

62. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 47, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
in response to user input that specifies that data should be loaded into a subscribed database, determining whether the subscribed database currently exists for said one of said second parties; and
creating the subscribed database if the subscribed database does not currently exist for said one of said second parties.

63. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 48, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
presenting representations of selectable application development kits;

receiving user input indicating a selected development kit from the user; and
launching a staging process including
configuring consumable database resources on a staging database device, wherein a
staging database device can be accessed by the user for developing the new
database application and cannot be accessed by users associated with other parties
of said plurality of second parties,
receiving development input from the user; and
building a new application on the staging database device based on the selected
development kit and the development input.

64. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 63, the step of developing the new database application further comprising the steps of

after receiving user input indicating a selected development kit, determining whether a
client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded to a computer
of the user over ~~the~~ a wide area network; and
if it is determined the client process of the selected development kit must be downloaded,
downloading the client process to the computer of the user over the wide area
network before the step of building the new application.

65. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 63, the step of developing a new database application further comprising the steps of:

receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for operational use;
and
in response to receiving input from the user indicating the new application is ready for
operational use, launching a production transfer process including sending a
request to the first party to transfer the new application to a production device on
which the new application may be accessed by users who did not develop the new
application.

66. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 49, further comprising instructions for integrating the external service, wherein the step of integrating comprises the steps of:

- presenting a representation of a selectable external service;
- receiving user input indicating a selected external service; and
- launching an integration process to provide the external service to the user.

67. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 66, wherein the selectable external service includes at least one of a payment service, a mobile Internet portal, an enterprise resource planning application, and a customer relationship management application.

68. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for the first party performing at least one of the steps of:

- setting up database parameters;
- reporting database usage;
- backing up the database;
- upgrading the database;
- controlling database versions;
- implementing database security; and
- implementing data security within the database.

69. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 36, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

- if a costing database does not already exist, then
 - automatically creating the costing database of database resource usage by user, and
 - initiating a costing model with price per unit of consumable resource per service;
- inserting data into the costing database based on actual use of database resources by the user;
- executing the costing model to compute a cost-per-user based on the data in the costing database and the price per unit of consumable resource per service; and
- billing the user for the cost computed by the costing model.

70. (Currently Amended) The one or more computer-readable storage media ~~computer-readable storage medium~~ of claim 69, wherein the costing model supports:

- fixed price per unit of usage;
- variable price per unit usage as a function of usage;
- flat price up to a maximum value of usage;
- different prices for different users;
- different prices for different services; and
- different prices for increments of usage above a maximum subscribed usage.

71. (Canceled)

72. (Currently Amended) The method of claim-~~71~~ 1, wherein one of the plurality of second parties is an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

73. (Canceled)

74. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, where the step of receiving information includes receiving, from a particular second party, information that specifies one or more of:

- a maximum amount of storage space of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a maximum amount of users of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a maximum transaction rate of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a frequency of backup of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a frequency and format of usage reports of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- Internet access parameters for mobile devices to be used by the particular second party;
- a payment service for the database resources to be used by the particular second party; or
- information about development of applications for the database resources to be used by the particular second party.

75.-81. (Canceled)

82. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the second parties control the source code of the database applications that the second parties use to send database commands to the database management systems managed by the first parties.

83. (New) The method of Claim 1, further comprising delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to access a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed.

84. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein the second parties own said database applications.

85. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein one of the plurality of second parties is an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

86. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, where the step of receiving information includes receiving, from a particular second party, information that specifies one or more of:

- a maximum amount of storage space of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a maximum amount of users of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a maximum transaction rate of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a frequency of backup of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- a frequency and format of usage reports of the database resources to be used by the particular second party;
- Internet access parameters for mobile devices to be used by the particular second party;
- a payment service for the database resources to be used by the particular second party; or
- information about development of applications for the database resources to be used by the particular second party.

87. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein the second parties control the source code of the database applications that the second parties use to send database commands to the database management systems managed by the first parties.

88. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein the instructions, when executed by the one or more processors, further cause: delivering to a user associated with said one of said second parties, one or more messages which cause generation of user interfaces that allow the user to access a database for a database service to which said one of said second parties has subscribed.

89. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 36, wherein the second parties own said database applications.

90. (New) A method comprising:

a first party managing a database system, wherein the database system comprises one or more database servers and a plurality of database devices;
wherein the first party stores data in the plurality of database devices on behalf of a plurality of subscribers, the plurality of subscribers having provided said data;
receiving subscription information identifying a database resource for which a second party has indicated a willingness to pay;
in response to the subscription information:
 configuring a database device for the second party in the database system managed by the first party; and
 allocating the database resource at the database device;
receiving, at the database system, from a database application through which the second party provides services based on data stored on behalf of the second party at the database device, a database command to access the database device;
wherein the database command conforms to a database language supported by the database system; and
in response to the database command, the database system providing the database application with access to the database device;

wherein the steps of receiving the subscription information, configuring the database device, allocating the database resources, receiving the database command, and providing access are performed by one or more computing devices operated by the first party.

91. (New) The method of Claim 90, wherein the database device is a dedicated hardware database device.
92. (New) The method of Claim 90, wherein the database device is a virtual database device.
93. (New) The method of Claim 90, wherein the database application is a database application hosted by the first party on behalf of the second party.
94. (New) The method of Claim 90, wherein the database application is a database application hosted by the second party at a computing device connected to the database system via a network.
95. (New) One or more computer-readable storage media storing instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause:
 - a first party managing a database system, wherein the database system comprises one or more database servers and a plurality of database devices;
 - wherein the first party stores data in the plurality of database devices on behalf of a plurality of subscribers, the plurality of subscribers having provided said data;
 - receiving subscription information identifying a database resource for which a second party has indicated a willingness to pay;
 - in response to the subscription information:
 - configuring a database device for the second party in the database system managed by the first party; and
 - allocating the database resource at the database device;
 - receiving, at the database system, from a database application through which the second party provides services based on data stored on behalf of the second party at the database device, a database command to access the database device;

wherein the database command conforms to a database language supported by the database system; and
in response to the database command, the database system providing the database application with access to the database device.

96. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 95, wherein the database device is a dedicated hardware database device.

97. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 95, wherein the database device is a virtual database device.

98. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 95, wherein the database application is a database application hosted by the first party on behalf of the second party.

99. (New) The one or more computer-readable storage media of Claim 95, wherein the database application is a database application hosted by the second party at a computing device connected to the database system via a network.